

2017 NHQ 017611

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**MEMORANDUM TO THE SENIOR ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER OF
INCOME SECURITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ASSISTANT
DEPUTY MINISTER OF BENEFITS DELIVERY SERVICES**

**CANADA PENSION PLAN DISABILITY
EXPANDING THE AUTHORITY OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS**

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

The role of nurse practitioners is evolving, both within the Canadian medical landscape and government programs. Notably, Budget 2017 called for nurse practitioners to be added to the list of medical practitioners who are permitted to certify eligibility for the disability tax credit.

Currently, Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) policy authorizes nurse practitioners working in a geographically isolated area where there is decreased availability of physicians to independently complete an initial medical report. It is recommended that all nurse practitioners be authorized to complete the form.

In order to assess the risks and impacts of the proposed policy change, CPPD officials held targeted consultations with the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and with members of the CPPD Client and Stakeholder Roundtable. These discussions yielded positive endorsements of the concept of expanding the role of nurse practitioners within the CPPD program.

Your joint decision is requested at your earliest convenience.

BACKGROUND

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with additional educational preparation and experience who possess and demonstrate the competencies to diagnose autonomously, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe pharmaceuticals, and perform specific medical procedures within their legislated scope of practice.

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Canada

The scope of practice of nurse practitioners is set out in federal and provincial/territorial legislation and regulation. The profession enforces standards of practice and conduct through provincial and territorial nursing regulatory bodies throughout Canada.

There are almost 5 000 nurse practitioners in Canada, providing advanced care to almost three million Canadians in many settings: community health centres, nursing outposts, specialty units and clinics, emergency departments, and long-term care facilities. Within these varied settings, their specific roles include working as part of multidisciplinary healthcare teams, physician nurse practitioner,

The United States government has also updated its rules regarding nurse practitioners. The Social Security Administration (SSA) recognized that for many Social Security disability claimants, nurse practitioners are the “treating source” of medical care for physical and mental illness. Effective March 27, 2017, the SSA expanded the class of healthcare professionals whose opinions can be considered in deciding whether a claimant is disabled to include not only physicians, but also nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other licensed providers.

CURRENT STATUS

CPPD officials held two bi-lateral meetings with representatives of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) at which CNA put forward a proposal asking the federal government to authorize nurse practitioners to complete the initial medical report a person requires when applying for the Canada Pension Plan disability benefit.

The CNA has actively lobbied for a greater role for nurse practitioners in a broad range of models of healthcare. Through their consultations, the CNA has confirmed a willingness on the part of parliamentary and government officials to expand the role of nurse practitioners.

CPPD officials met with representatives of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in April 2017. The CMA endorsed an expanded role for nurse practitioners and viewed the proposed participation of nurse practitioners as lightening the physician's workload and reporting burden.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that CPPD policy be revised to allow all nurse practitioners to certify the initial CPPD medical report. Updating this policy would broaden the program's access and thereby further align the Department with the recommendations put forward in the 2015 Office of the Auditor General of Canada report on the Canada Pension Plan Disability Program.

NEXT STEPS

Changing the role of nurse practitioners within CPPD is a policy issue only (Annex A, The Provision of Medical Evidence by Nurses and Nurse Practitioners). CPP legislation does not specify that the medical information must be provided by a physician.

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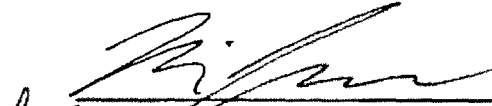
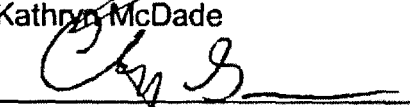
Should you decide to expand CPPD policy to allow all nurse practitioners to certify the CPPD initial medical report, an implementation plan detailing how the formal policy change will be incorporated in operational materials will be developed for your review. A communications plan will also be developed in collaboration with Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch following discussions with the Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Minister and the Minister's Office.

Your decision is requested at your earliest convenience.

Kris Johnson

Key Contact: Marc Racine
819-654-2718

I concur:


for Kathryn McDade

Cliff Groen

July 10, 2017
Date
17-7-2017
Date

I do not concur:

Kathryn McDade

Date

Cliff Groen

Date

Attachments: 1

The Provision of Medical Evidence by Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

Effective Date: August 1999 (posted February 2006)

Authorization: Susan Williams, Director General, CPP Disability

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1. Purpose

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To provide policy direction regarding medical reports completed by Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and the authorization to pay for the reports.

This policy will help staff determine whether Canada Pension Plan (CPP) can accept a medical report signed by a RN or a NP for a client living in an isolated area, and if that evidence can be accepted at full value for adjudication purposes.

2. Background

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2.1 Medical Report Required for Initial Adjudication

Form 2519 is the initial Medical Report included in the CPP disability application kit. The 2519 is usually completed by a family physician. The physician who completes the report has not necessarily